

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 96-900

August 20, 1997

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION/NYNEX,
Schools and Libraries Project

ORDER

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and HUNT, Commissioners

I. SUMMARY

The School and Library Project Advisory Board asked the Commission to approve additional training, additional computer grants and a survey of school and libraries. In this Order, we approve up to an additional \$100,000 for computer grants, \$265,000 for training and \$20,000 for a survey.

II. DISCUSSION

A. Computer Grants

In approving the project, we allowed up to \$500,000 for grants to schools and libraries that had no computer capable of operating on the network. We approved the Board's qualifications for new computer grants and upgrade grants. As of August 4, 1997, the Board Chair had approved 223 new computer grants of \$2,000 each and 89 upgrades of \$600 each, therefore exceeding \$500,000 initial cap. The Board anticipates that there may be additional grant requests as the last schools and libraries are connected to the network. We authorize up to a \$100,000 for computer grants to be distributed using the same criteria the Board has had in place since the start of the project. We do not expect any other spending on computers, in addition to this amount, through the end of the project in June, 2000.

B. Additional Training

The Board asks the Commission to approve additional spending on training of \$395,970 for 1997-1998. Last year we approved \$500,000 for training and \$50,000 for technical coordinator training. The Board proposes to repeat last year's train-the-trainer modules, make a library of tapes and discs available for lending to sites, and to award grants for customized training at specific sites. They project a cost of \$277,179 to repeat the train-the-trainer modules using the same three subcontractors, \$59,396 for the tape and library and site specific training and \$59,396 for administration. In addition, \$24,000 unspent from the \$50,000 allocation for technical coordinator

training will be spent on additional technical coordinator training. We believe some additional training is necessary to support the remainder of the project. We will authorize spending up to \$260,000 (in addition to the \$24,000 left from last year's technical coordinator training) for training. We neither approve or disapprove the spending distribution contained in the Board's proposal. We leave it to the Board's discretion to determine the best way to use these funds. The Board should report back to the Commission on its training plans, although we do not require any further Commission approval of the plans.

C. Evaluation

The Board plans to conduct a survey in October 1997 of eligible schools and libraries participating in the project. They anticipate that expenses for the survey will not exceed \$20,000. We approve the Board conducting a survey. The Board should ensure that the primary focus of the survey is on the questions posed by the Legislature in 35-A M.R.S.A. § 7104-A(4).

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this20 20th day of August, 1997.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis Keschl
Acting Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR:

Welch
Nugent
Hunt